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(b) *Rehabilitated to the point of employability.* The veteran was previously declared rehabilitated to the point of employability, under the Department of Veterans Affairs vocational rehabilitation program, but either:

(1) The veteran's service-connected disability or disabilities have worsened to the extent that he or she is unable to perform the duties of the occupation in which he or she is trained, or in a related occupation; or

(2) The occupation in which the veteran was rehabilitated to the point of employability is not presently suitable in view of the veteran's current employment handicap and capabilities. (The finding of unsuitability must be based upon objective evidence developed in the course of reconsideration which shows that the nature or extent of the veteran's employment handicap and his or her capabilities are significantly different than were previously found.) or;

(3) Occupational requirements have changed and additional services are needed to help the veteran continue in the occupation in which he or she was trained or in a related field.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3103(c))

§ 21.45 Extension beyond basic period of eligibility for a program of independent living services.

The period of eligibility for a veteran to pursue a program of independent living services may be extended beyond the basic twelve-year period under the following conditions:

(a) The veteran's medical condition (service and nonservice-connected disabilities) is so severe that achievement of a vocational goal is not currently reasonably feasible, or (b) the extension is necessary to ensure that he or she will achieve maximum independence in daily living.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3103(d); Pub. L. (99–576)

[49 FR 40814, Oct. 18, 1984, as amended at 53 FR 50956, Dec. 19, 1988]

§ 21.47 Eligibility for employment assistance.

(a) *Providing employment services to veterans eligible for a rehabilitation program under chapter 31.* Each veteran, other than one found in need of a pro-

gram of independent living services and assistance, who is otherwise currently eligible for and entitled to participate in a program of rehabilitation under chapter 31 may receive employment services. Included are those veterans who:

(1) Have completed a program of rehabilitation services under chapter 31 and been declared rehabilitated to the point of employability;

(2) Have not completed a period of rehabilitation to the point of employability under chapter 31, but:

(i) Have elected to secure employment without completing the period of rehabilitation to the point of employability; and

(ii) Are employable; or

(3) Have never received services for rehabilitation to the point of employability under chapter 31 if they:

(i) Are employable or employed in a suitable occupation;

(ii) Have an employment handicap or a serious employment handicap; and

(iii) Need employment services to secure and/or maintain suitable employment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3102)

(b) *Veteran previously participated in a VA vocational rehabilitation program or a similar program under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.* A veteran who at some time in the past has participated in a vocational rehabilitation program under chapter 31 or a similar program under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and is employable is eligible for employment services under the following conditions even though he or she is ineligible for any other assistance under chapter 31:

(1) The veteran is employable in a suitable occupation;

(2) The veteran has filed a claim for vocational rehabilitation or employment assistance;

(3) The veteran meets the criteria for eligibility described in § 21.40(a); and

(4) The veteran has an employment handicap or serious employment handicap; and

(5) The veteran:

(i) Completed a vocational rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. ch. 31 or participated in such a program for at

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least 90 days on or after September 16, 1940; or

(ii) Completed a vocational rehabilitation program under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 after September 26, 1975, or participated in such a program which included at least 90 days of post-secondary education or vocational training.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3117)

(c) *Veteran never received vocational rehabilitation services from the Department of Veterans Affairs or under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.* If a veteran is currently ineligible under chapter 31 because he or she does not have an employment handicap, and has never before participated in a vocational rehabilitation program under chapter 31 or under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, no employment assistance may now be provided to the veteran under chapter 31.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3117)

(d) *Duration of period of employment assistance.* The periods during which employment assistance may be provided are not subject to limitations on periods of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation provided in §§ 21.41 through 21.45 of this part, but entitlement to such assistance is, as provided in § 21.73 of this part, limited to 18 total months of assistance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3105)

[54 FR 21215, May 17, 1989, as amended at 56 FR 15836, Apr. 18, 1991]

§ 21.48 Severance of service-connection—reduction to noncompensable degree.

When a rating action is taken which proposes severance of service-connection or reduction to a noncompensable degree, the provisions of the following paragraphs will govern the veteran's entitlement to rehabilitation and employment assistance under 38 U.S.C. Chapter 31.

(a) *Applicant.* If the veteran is an applicant for rehabilitation or employment assistance when the proposed rating action is taken, all processes respecting determination of entitlement or induction into training shall be immediately suspended. In no event shall

any veteran be inducted into a rehabilitation program or provided employment assistance during the interim periods provided in § 3.105 (d) and (e) of this title. If the proposed rating action becomes final, the application will be denied. See also § 21.50 as to initial evaluation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3104)

(b) *Reduction while in a rehabilitation program.* If the proposed rating action is taken while the veteran is in a rehabilitation program and results in a reduction to a noncompensable rating of his or her disability, the veteran may be retained in the program until the completion of the program, except if "discontinued" under § 21.198 he or she may not reenter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3103)

(c) *Severance while in a rehabilitation program.* If the proposed rating action is taken while the veteran is in a rehabilitation program and results in severance of the service-connection of his or her disability, rehabilitation will be terminated effective as of the last day of the month in which severance of service-connection becomes final.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3103)

INITIAL AND EXTENDED EVALUATION

§ 21.50 Initial evaluation.

(a) *Eligibility for initial evaluation.* VA shall provide an initial evaluation to each individual who applies for benefits under chapter 31 if the individual's compensable service-connected disability meets one of the conditions contained in § 21.40(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3102(1), Pub. L. 101-508)

(b) *Purpose.* An initial evaluation will be provided to each individual who meets the conditions of paragraph (a) of this section to:

- (1) Determine the existence of an employment handicap;
- (2) Determine the basic twelve-year period of eligibility;
- (3) Determine whether an employment handicap shall be considered a serious employment handicap;